Network Description
Health Choice Network

1. History

Health Choice Network (HCN) is a community-based, not for profit 501 (c) (3) organizations representing a group of South Florida Health Centers and other health care providers and organizations.

In the early 1990s three of the current members were part of an organization known as The Primary Health Care Consortium - a loose affiliation of health centers, the state health department, and a public hospital. Having been established in the early 1970s, these health centers had a significant history of providing health services to the underserved patient population in the region. In 1993, these Health Centers funded a strategic planning effort to determine how the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) could become more closely affiliated. The result was the formation of Health Choice Network.

Thus the network was founded in 1994 by three Community Health Centers: Community Health Center of South Dade, Inc., Economic Opportunity Family Health Center, Inc., and Family Health Center, Inc.

Camillus Health Concern, Inc joined within the first year of operation. Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida, Inc. joined in 1996, effectively expanding the service scope beyond the original Miami-Dade County to encompass South Florida. The five network member health centers operate over 30 sites throughout Miami-Dade, Lee, and Hendry counties. Together, the health centers serve approximately 100,000 customers.

In an effort to compete in the managed care marketplace, Health Choice Network then established Atlantic Care as a not for profit subsidiary of HCN. Atlantic Care holds a Medicaid risk contract with Physicians Health Plan, a licensed HMO. Marketplace, regulatory, and financial analysis showed that it was better to partner with an existing HMO plan rather than to create HCN's own Medicaid plan to contract directly with the state.

2. Health Choice Network

A. Motivation for Forming

HCN states that their motivation for forming a network was the need to establish a closer affiliation between member health centers. This closer affiliation was viewed as a way to obtain economies of scale to be able to fund the kind of infrastructure needed to compete effectively in the marketplace. Atlantic Care was created to compete in the managed care marketplace.

B. Organization

HCN is the operating entity of a regional network serving South Florida. Other organizational and MIS integration work is in progress, with the ultimate goal of obtaining full MIS integration.

The Chief Executive Officers of each health center, one other member from each "founding" corporation, and a Clinical Director appointed by the Clinical Committee form the Board of Directors. Multi-year affiliation agreements exist across the four community health centers. Atlantic Care manages the Health Choice Network's managed care products and provides management services to member centers in the managed care arena.

C. Members

Health Choice Network consists of the following members:

Participating Members

Participating members enjoy full benefits under the HCN's charter (including board status). These FQHCs form the core of the network and consist of:

- 4 Community Health Centers
- 1 Homeless Health Center

Supporting Members

The Network's supporting members are not FQHCs. This category of membership enjoys some, but not all, of the benefits provided by the network.

- 2 Hospital Systems
- 1 Independent Hospital

Contributing Members

Contributing members are health care organizations other than FQHCs, hospitals or hospital systems.

- 1 Hospital Association
- 1 Pharmacy Service

D. Degree of Sharing

Health Choice Network integrates most of the common functions between its members. For a complete integration picture refer to **Appendix A - Integration Matrix.**

HCN's MIS function can be classified as partially integrated in that it provides centralized data center services to HCN. The health centers' applications still reside on separate servers. (See **Appendix B - MIS Integration Matrix**)

3. Benefits

- Increased collaboration between health centers through improved information sharing
- More efficient utilization of resources
- Cost savings through elimination of duplicate fiscal, information, administrative and clinical systems

- Improvement in systems quality through HCN's ability to attract, employ and retain high-level information technology staff

- Improved negotiating position with payers, providers of secondary, tertiary and ancillary care and suppliers through increase in size and market position

- Improvement in management reporting and decision support

4. Infrastructure

Practice Management System:	Medical Manager
Accounting:	Platinum
Payroll:	ADP Payroll System
Mail:	Microsoft Exchange Server
Office Automation:	Microsoft Office
Topology:	Wide Area Network (WAN), 256K frame relay w/internet connection

Centralized Hardware:

- IBM RISC 6000 - Medical Manager
- Citrix Application Servers - Accounting, Office Automation
- Windows NT File Server
- SQL Data Warehouse
- Health Center-specific application servers

5. Critical Success Factors

Executive support including continuous involvement by CHC boards and their CEOs

Executive commitment to ongoing MIS investment

Legal assistance in vendor /payer contract negotiations, developing affiliation agreements, and forming Atlantic Care

Recognition of MIS skills requirements

Realistic expectation setting

Importance of communications

Ongoing training

Appendix A - Integration Matrix

FUNCTION	None	Collaborative	Shared	Integrated
CLINICAL				
Clinical Services / Programs			•	
Treatment Protocols				•
Staffing	•			
Documentation				
Medical Records		•		
Common Forms		•		
Policies & Procedures		•		
Ancillary Services	•			
Research / Studies				•
CQI				•
Outcomes Measures				•
Immunization/Morbidity Registries	•			
Pharmaceutical Formulary	•			
ADMINISTRATIVE				
Human Resources	•			
Education				
Community			•	
Patient/Customer			•	
Staff			•	
Board				•
Credentialing				•
Purchasing				•
Program / Services Development.				•
Resource Development		•		
Communications				
Public Relations		•		
Advocacy		•		
Marketing				•
Strategic Planning				•
Quality Improvement				•
Member Services - Managed Care				•
Contract Administration				•
Master Person/Patient Index	•			
Internal Audit				
Staff	•			
Patients	•			

FUNCTION	None	Collaborative	Shared	Integrated
FISCAL				
Grants Management				•
Managed Care Contracting				•
Accounting				
GL			•	
A/R			•	
A/P			•	
Payroll			•	
Policies and Procedures				•
External Auditing				•
Regulatory Compliance				
Medicare				•
Medicaid				
Billing and Collections			•	

Appendix B - MIS Integration Matrix

MIS	None	Data Center	Partial Integration	Full Integration
Practice Management System				
Data Elements / Data Dictionary			•	
Data Sharing			•	
Data Administration			•	
Management Reporting				•
				•
Communications				•
Central Data Center				•
Internet/Email Services				•
Accounting		•		
Information Systems / Information Technology				
Administrative				•
Clinical				•
Fiscal				•
Office Automation		•		